

REMARKS

The undersigned attorney participated in a telephone interview with Examiners Anglo and Enad on March 17, 2009. During that interview, it was agreed that the amendments to claims 1 and 29 presented herein would be sufficient to overcome the rejection of those claims in view of Takano et al., U.S. Patent 5,382,767 ("Takano") and Katsumi, U.S. Patent 6,369,341 ("Katsumi"), and that the amendment to claim 32 presented herein would be sufficient to overcome the rejection of that claim in view of Hochgesang et al., U.S. Patent 5,642,950 ("Hochgesang") and Katsumi.

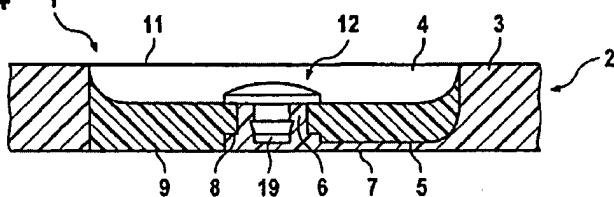
In response to the office action mailed November 14, 2008, Applicants amended claims 1, 29, and 32, cancelled claim 36, and added claims 45-54. Claims 2 and 5 were previously cancelled. Claims 1, 3, 4, 6-35, and 37-54 are presented for examination.

Applicants thank the Examiner for acknowledging that claims 3, 6, 11, 17, 24-26, and 36 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Embodiment of Applicants' Electrical Appliance Housing

Referring to Fig. 4 of Applicants' application, which is reproduced below, an embodiment of Applicants' electrical appliance housing includes a housing body 2 having in its wall 3 an aperture 4 and an elastic bar 5 having a free end extending into the aperture 4. See, e.g., U.S. 2006/0060461, ¶¶ [0007] and [0041]-[0043]. The housing further includes a base 6, a membrane 9, and an actuating button 12. See, e.g., id., ¶¶ [0041]-[0045]. The base 6 is secured to the bar 5, and the actuating button 12 is fastened to the base 6. See, e.g., id., ¶¶ [0042], [0045]. The membrane 9 is molded over the elastic bar 5 and around the base 6 and seals the aperture 4. See, e.g., id., ¶ [0044]. As a result, as shown in Fig. 4, for example, the membrane 9 is bonded directly to the elastic bar 5 and the base 6.

Fig. 4

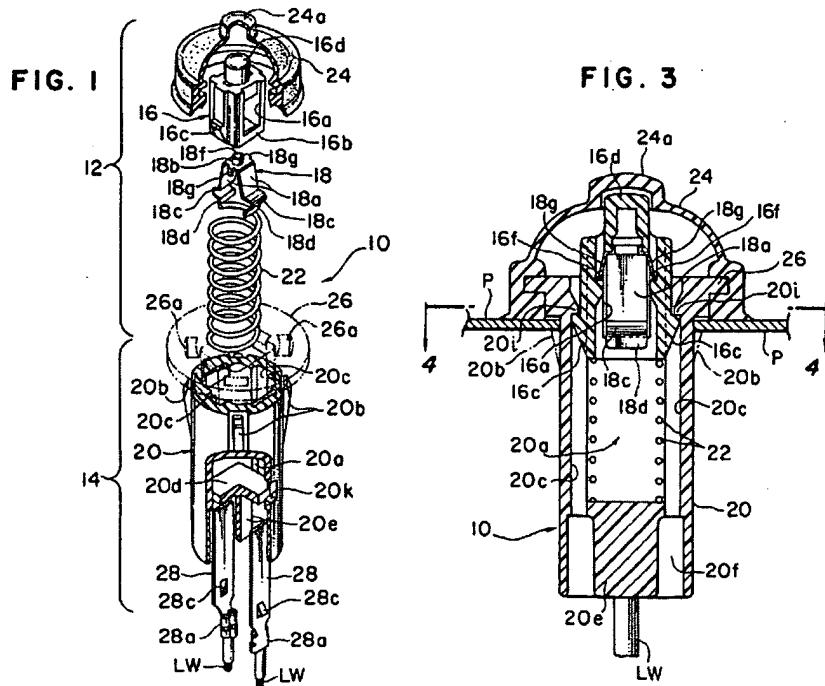


The elastic bar 5 can make it easier to position the base 6 in the aperture 4. See, e.g., id., ¶ [0007]. Additionally or alternatively, the elastic bar 5 can support the membrane 9 to reduce the formation of creases in the membrane or to limit the amount of yielding of the membrane. See, e.g., id.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 4, 7-10, 12-16, 18-21, 27-31, and 39-44 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Takano in view of Katsumi. But Takano and Katsumi, taken alone and in any proper combination, fail to disclose or render obvious an electrical appliance housing including a membrane that is directly bonded to a base and an elastic bar, as required by these claims.

Referring to Takano's Figs. 1 and 3 below, Takano describes a push-button assembly 12 that includes a push-button member 16 which carries a slide contact member 18 within an interior space 20a defined by an insulating housing 20. See, e.g., Takano, col. 3, lines 50-58. The push-button member 16 includes guide flanges 16c on opposed sidewalls of the push-button member 16. See, e.g., id., col. 4, lines 16-22. As shown in Takano's Fig. 3, a resilient elastomeric cap 24 is attached to an upper collar flange 26 of the housing 20. See, e.g., id., col. 4, lines 3-7. Without conceding that Takano's push-button member 16, guide flange 16c, and elastomeric cap 24 could properly be considered the claimed base, elastic bar, and membrane, as contended by the Examiner, Applicants submit that Takano's elastomeric cap 24 is not directly bonded to his push-button member 16 or his guide flange 16c. Takano simply does not disclose a membrane that is directly bonded to a base and an elastic bar.



Katsumi also fails to disclose an electrical appliance housing including a membrane that is directly bonded to a base and an elastic bar, as required by Applicants' claims 1, 4, 7-10, 12-16, 18-21, 27-31, and 39-44. In addition, one skilled in the art would not have combined the teachings of Takano and Katsumi in a manner to achieve Applicants' claimed electrical appliance housings.

In view of the foregoing, Takano and Katsumi, taken alone and in any proper combination, fail to disclose or render obvious each and every limitation of claims 1, 4, 7-10, 12-16, 18-21, 27-31, and 39-44. Therefore, Applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of these claims as being unpatentable over Takano in view of Katsumi.

Claims 22 and 23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Takano in view of Katsumi further in view of Buchan et al. (US 6,064,019). But Buchan fails to cure the deficiencies discussed above with respect to Takano and Katsumi. Thus, for at least the reasons discussed above, Applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection.

Claims 32-35, 37, and 38 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hochgesang et al. (US 5,642,950) in view of Katsumi. Applicants have amended claim 32 to include the limitations of previously presented claim 36, which the Examiner indicated to be allowable. Therefore, Applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection of claim 32 and of claims 33-35, 37, and 38, each of which depends from claim 32.

Applicants have also added new claims 45-54. Claims 45-53 depend from either claim 1, 29, or 32, and are thus allowable for at least the reasons discussed above. Claim 54 includes all of the limitations of previously presented claim 1 and previously presented claim 6, which the Examiner indicated to be allowable. Therefore, Applicants request that each of new claims 45-54 be allowed.

The fees in the amount of \$1768 for the RCE (\$810), excess claims fees (\$468) and the Petition for Extension of Time fee (\$490) are being paid concurrently herewith on the Electronic Filing System (EFS) by way of Deposit Account authorization. Please apply all charges or credits to Deposit Account No. 06-1050, referencing Attorney Docket No. 02894-717US1.

Respectfully submitted,

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